



**ALEX PADILLA** | SECRETARY OF STATE | STATE OF CALIFORNIA  
ELECTIONS DIVISION

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**MY VOICE. MY CHOICE.**

**MYVOTE**

## Voting Rights for Californians with Criminal Convictions or Detained in Jail or Prison

### Eligibility Requirements

You can register to vote and vote if you are:

- A United States citizen;
- A resident of California;
- At least 18 years of age or older on or before the next Election Day;
- Not currently imprisoned or on parole for the conviction of a felony; and
- Not found mentally incompetent by a court of law.

### Eligible to register and vote:

- In county jail serving a misdemeanor sentence. A misdemeanor never affects your right to vote.
- In county jail because jail time is a condition of probation.
- On probation.
- On mandatory supervision.
- On post-release community supervision.
- **Done with parole.** Your right to vote is **automatically restored** when you complete your parole. You just need to fill out a voter registration application either online at [RegisterToVote.ca.gov](http://RegisterToVote.ca.gov) or using a paper voter registration card.

### Not eligible to register and vote:

- Currently imprisoned:
  - ✓ In state prison.
  - ✓ In county jail serving a state prison sentence.
- Currently on parole.

### Criminal Justice Realignment Act

In 2011, the Legislature passed and the Governor signed the Criminal Justice Realignment Act (Realignment). Under Penal Code section 1170(h), low-level felons are sentenced to county jail and/or supervision by the county probation department instead of state prison. Realignment has caused some confusion about voting rights among people who have criminal convictions. The chart above provide an explanation of who is eligible and who is not eligible to register to vote in California.

California Penal Code section 2910 allows the California Department of Corrections & Rehabilitation (CDCR) to make agreements with local governments to house felons in a county jail or other correctional facility. For more information, please visit CDCR's website <http://www.cdcr.ca.gov/realignment/index.html>. If you have questions about your voting rights, please contact your parole or county probation office.

## **How to Register to Vote**

You may request a voter registration card from the Secretary of State or your county elections office. You may also apply to register to vote on the Secretary of State's website [RegisterToVote.ca.gov](http://RegisterToVote.ca.gov). Your voter registration application must be received or postmarked at least fifteen (15) days before Election Day to be eligible to vote in that election. Voter registration cards and voting materials are available in English, Chinese, Hindi, Japanese, Khmer, Korean, Spanish, Tagalog, Thai, and Vietnamese. If you are in jail, you are entitled to receive a voter registration card if you are eligible to vote. See the attached list for state and local elections office contact information.

## **Vote by Mail**

If you are already registered to vote at your current home address, you may request a vote-by-mail ballot application by contacting your county elections office. Once you receive your vote-by-mail ballot application, you must complete and return it to your county elections office at least seven (7) days before Election Day.

If you are not registered to vote at your current home address, you may register or re-register to vote and request a vote-by-mail ballot on the Secretary of State's website [RegisterToVote.ca.gov](http://RegisterToVote.ca.gov).

## **Release from Custody**

If you requested a vote-by-mail ballot but are released from custody before you receive your ballot, you can still vote. Just go to the polling place for your home address or any polling place in the county where you are registered and vote a provisional ballot.

If you change your name, home address, mailing address, or party preference you must complete a new voter registration card.

Voter registration cards are available at most public libraries and government offices. Additionally, you may apply to register to vote online at [RegisterToVote.ca.gov](http://RegisterToVote.ca.gov).

## **Resources**

For more information contact your county elections office (see attached roster) or the California Secretary of State:

**California Secretary of State  
Elections Division**  
1500 11th Street, 5th Floor  
Sacramento, CA 95814  
[elections@sos.ca.gov](mailto:elections@sos.ca.gov)  
[www.sos.ca.gov](http://www.sos.ca.gov)

### **Voter Hotlines**

(800) 345-VOTE (8683) - English  
(800) 232-VOTA (8682) - español /Spanish  
(800) 339-2857 - 中文 / Chinese  
(888) 345-2692 - हिन्दी / Hindi  
(800) 339-2865 - 日本語 / Japanese  
(888) 345-4917 - ខ្មែរ / Khmer  
(866) 575-1558 - 한국어 / Korean  
(800) 339-2957 - Tagalog  
(855) 345-3933 - ภาษาไทย / Thai  
(800) 339-8163 - Việt ngữ / Vietnamese  
(800) 833-8683 - TTY/TDD



## WHY VOTE?

Why do you think it's important to vote? Do you know someone who is registered and/or has already voted? If so, do you know why they did it?



- Do you care about: Job opportunities and health care for your family and friends? How long prison sentences are? When someone is eligible for parole? Our national security? Funding for education, music and sports programs? How about financial aid for college or finding a job when you graduate?
- Guess what? Every single one of those things, and many more, are decided by our elected officials (the people who run your school board, work in Sacramento and represent you in Congress). They are making decisions every day that impact your life. The Stand Your Ground law that protected George Zimmerman when he killed Trayvon Martin was a law voted on by the public. Marijuana was legalized in Colorado and Washington by the voters.

- Voting is our chance to choose the decision makers and say what we think on the issues that matter most to us.

- Voting brings us all together as Americans. It's one time whether you're young or old, rich or poor, that we all have the same say.



Voting is our chance to take control over what happens to our families, our community, and us.

- Once you are registered, it's important to get informed and learn about what is on the ballot, then VOTE!

- Most likely, you'll have several choices to make when you vote. For example, in 2014 you'll vote for the Governor and the State Attorney General. You may also be asked to vote on other things, like money for schools or roads, and whether you approve of certain laws.



- *You do not have to vote for everything on your ballot. You can cast your vote only for the issues and offices you choose.*

## HOW DO I KNOW WHAT OR WHOM TO VOTE FOR?

- **PEOPLE:** Find someone you trust who knows a lot about the issues. Listen to the opinions of friends and family members. Ask people whom they're voting for, **and why**. Then make up your own mind.
- **LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS** (not just for women): The League's state and local Easy Voter Guides explain the pros and cons of various measures on the ballot. In Oakland, find it in the East Bay Express early in October. The League is neutral, which means that it does not support any particular political party or candidate. However, it can take a position on ballot measures. There are also in person events.
- **MAIL:** Look at who the organizations are that have sent the mailing. Do you recognize the group? Are they from organizations that have your best interests in mind? Who are the police, teachers, youth groups, unions endorsing? Find the groups that have your best interest and consider their endorsements.



- **TV:** Ads cost a lot of money. Who is paying for the ad? What is their interest? If it's an ad by a candidate for him or herself, it might not be accurate. TV ads can be misleading and distorted.
  - **VOTER HANDBOOKS** come in the mail. Read carefully. Who has signed the arguments for and against an initiative? For example, the OPD might urge you to vote for more police on the street and the East Bay Community Alliance might urge you vote for more arts programming. Consider what biases the writers of the arguments may have. Consider what they say and then decide which candidate or measure you want to support.
  - **INTERNET:** search for information about candidates and ballot measures. Evaluate the source of the information you find. [www.votersedge.org/ca](http://www.votersedge.org/ca): put in your zip code and get information about state and local elections, including where your polling location is.
- **Remember**, you do not have to vote for everything on your ballot. You can cast your vote only for the issues and offices you choose.



# LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF CALIFORNIA

## HOW TO EVALUATE BALLOT PROPOSITIONS

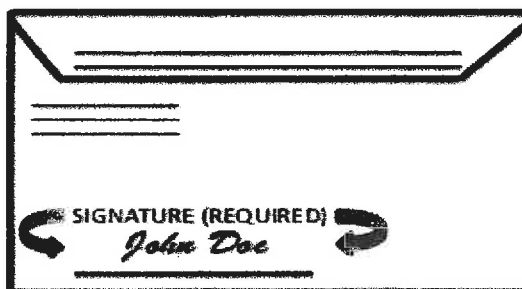
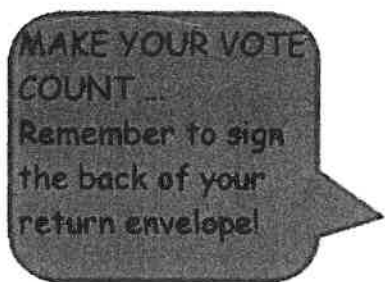
- Examine what the measure seeks to accomplish and determine if you agree with those goals
  - Is the measure consistent with your ideas about government?
  - Do you think the proposed changes will make things better?
  
- Determine who are the real sponsors and opponents of the measure
  - Who are the major financial contributors to the campaigns?
  - Go to Secretary of State website: [sos.ca.gov](http://sos.ca.gov) ([cal-access.sos.ca.gov](http://cal-access.sos.ca.gov))
  
- Decide if the measure is well written
  - Will it create conflicts in law that may require court interpretation or resolution?
  - Is it “good government”, or will it cause more problems that it will solve?
  
- Consider the fiscal impact
  - Does the measure create its own revenue source?
  - Does it earmark, restrict or obligate government revenues?
  - Weigh the benefit of securing funding for the measure against the cost of reducing budget flexibility
  - Does the measure mandate a government program or service without addressing how it will be funded?
  
- Consider the complexity of the measure
  - Does it deal with one issue that can be easily decided with a “yes” or “no” vote?
  - Or is it a complex issue that should be thoroughly examined in the legislative arena?
  
- If the measure amends the Constitution, consider whether it really belongs in the Constitution
  - Would a statute accomplish the same purpose?
  - All Constitutional amendments require voter approval; whatever we put into the Constitution would have to come back to the ballot to be changed
  
- Be wary of distortion tactics and commercials that rely on image but tell nothing of substance about the measure



## How To Vote By Mail

- If you signed-up for Vote by Mail, you will receive a ballot two to three weeks before the election.

- Put your completed ballot in the special envelope provided.



- On Election Day you can drop off your ballot at **any** polling place in your County (e.g. Alameda).

- OR you can **sign** on the back of the envelope and authorize someone else to drop the ballot off for you.

**VOTER:** Only complete this portion if you are designating an "Authorized Agent" to return your Vote by Mail Ballot.

I designate \_\_\_\_\_ who is my spouse, child, parent, grandparent, grandchild, brother/sister, or a person residing in the same household as I, to return my Vote by Mail Ballot.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Authorized Agent

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Voter

**VOTANTE:** Solamente complete esta porción si usted esta designando a un "Agente Autorizado" para devolver su Balota de Votación por Correo.

Yo nombro a \_\_\_\_\_ que es mi cónyuge, hijo/a, padre/madre, abuelo/a, nieto/a, hermano/a, o es una persona que vive en la misma casa que yo, para devolver mi Balota de Votación por Correo.

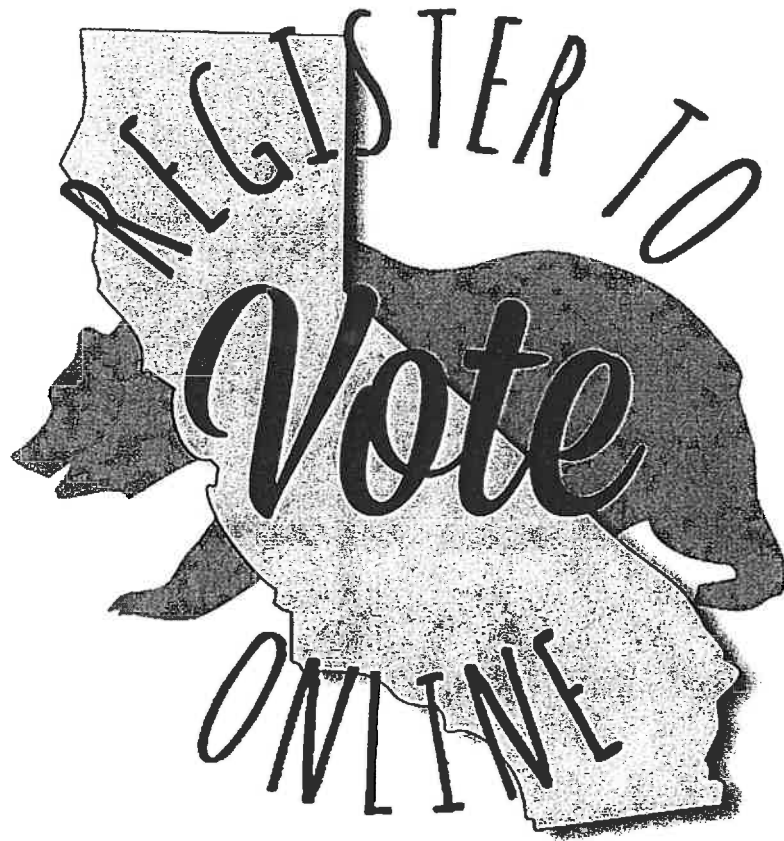
\_\_\_\_\_  
Firma del Agente Autorizado

\_\_\_\_\_  
Firma del Votante



- OR you can put stamps on the envelope. It depends on weight so go to a post office to find out how much. Mail about a week before Election Day, so it's received by November 8.

**League of Women Voters of Oakland**



AT [REGISTERTOVOTE.CA.GOV](http://REGISTERTOVOTE.CA.GOV)

Easy to complete application is available in English, Spanish, Chinese, Hindi, Japanese, Khmer, Korean, Tagalog, Thai, and Vietnamese.

*To be eligible to vote in the Presidential Primary ~~next~~<sup>in</sup> June, the deadline to register is May 23, 2016.*



*League of Women Voters- Oakland*



## Helpful Websites

**The Voter's Edge California** website – [www.votersedge.org/ca](http://www.votersedge.org/ca) - is an easy way to access all your election information. Simply enter your address to see a complete personalized ballot, candidate profiles, ballot measure explanations and information on your polling place. It includes links to additional sources, including:

- **Easy Voter Guide** –The League of Women Voters of California publishes an *Easy Voter Guide* containing a list of state ballot measures with basic information on each. Download at [www.easyvoter.org](http://www.easyvoter.org), or pick up a copy at the public libraries. It is available in: English, Spanish, Chinese, Vietnamese, and Korean.
- **League of Women Voters of California** – See our Education Fund website – [www.cavotes.org](http://www.cavotes.org) – to find unbiased information on ballot measures and other issues. Our General Fund website – [www.lwvc.org](http://www.lwvc.org) – has advocacy information, including recommendations on ballot measures.
- **League of Women Voters of Oakland** – [www.lwvoakland.org](http://www.lwvoakland.org) – explains Ranked-Choice Voting for our mayor, dates for candidate forums, voter information, league positions on propositions and more.
- **California Fair Political Practices Commission** – Access this site – [www.fppc.ca.gov](http://www.fppc.ca.gov) - and click on one of the buttons under “*Top Contributors*” to find out about major campaign donations to ballot measure campaigns.
- **California Secretary of State** – Access this site - and choose *Campaign Disclosure and Requirements* under *More about Campaign Finance and Lobbying Activities* to learn about reporting and disclosure obligations for candidates and campaign committees under the Political Reform Act. Click on *More about Elections and Voter Information* for more useful information.
- **Cal-Access** – Cal-Access provides links to various areas of financial information about candidates, campaigns statewide and by state Senate and Assembly campaigns. Access this site – [www.cal-access.sos.ca.gov](http://www.cal-access.sos.ca.gov) - to read the financial reports of campaign committees.
- **Flackcheck.org and Factcheck.org** – Look at misleading ads, and fact check the ads you see.
- **NonProfitVote.org** - a great resource with lots of information, including a “how to” guide for voter engagement activities for nonprofit organizations.

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